Priority Enrolments: Zoning by Stealth

The decision to move year ten students into senior secondary has serious planning implications that will drive an introduction of zoning by stealth.

Casuarina Senior College does not have the enrolment capacity to match demand. This removes choice. Government may use any term they wish; zoning will apply in practise.

Whilst the term ‘priority enrolments’ maintains a perception of freedom of choice the reality is that there can be no choice if there is no room.

Take Bakewell or Woodroffe Primary Schools in Palmerston for example. The Minister may deny it has ‘zoning’ policy. It is almost impossible for a family from outside the immediate area to enrol their child at either of these schools.

Enrolments at both schools exceed capacity and even make it difficult for families within the immediate area. A more benignly termed ‘priority enrolment policy applies’ in effect zoning.

Demand exceeds capacity because there is a missing school in Palmerston. The missing infrastructure denies freedom of choice for parents.

This is what will happen at Casuarina Senior College. Existing infrastructure will not match demand. This will result in a ‘priority enrolment policy’ or ‘zoning’ by another name. Just ask Palmerston parents if this is not the case.

Zoning: a policy to preclude students from travelling across designated zones to enrol in a school outside the ‘zone’ in which they reside.

Priority Enrolment: a student is free to enrol in a school outside of the ‘zone’ in which they reside priority is given to students residing within the school’s ‘zone’